

**Amendments to the Claims:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

**Listing of Claims:**

1. (original) A method of selecting a strain of lactic acid-utilising bacteria, which method comprises the steps of:

- a) providing a bacterial culture from a human faecal sample;
  - b) selecting a single colony of bacteria;
  - c) growing said colony in a suitable medium containing lactic acid; and
  - d) selecting a strain of bacteria consuming relatively large amounts of lactic acid,
- all of the above steps being conducted under anaerobic conditions.

2. (original) The method as claimed in Claim 1 wherein at least 10mM of lactic acid is consumed during growth into the stationary phase per 24 hours at 37°C in YCFALG or YCFAL medium.

3. (currently amended) The method as claimed in Claim 1 ~~either one of Claims 1 and 2~~ wherein said method comprises the additional step of:

- e) selecting a strain of bacteria producing relatively large quantities of butyric acid.

4. (original) The method as claimed in Claim 3 wherein at least 10mM butyric acid is produced during bacterial growth into the stationary phase per 24 hours at 37°C in YCFALG or YCFAL medium.

5. (currently amended) The method as claimed in Claim 1 ~~any one of Claims 1 to 4~~ wherein said lactic acid is a mixture of D and L isomers of lactic acid.

6. (original) *Anaerostipes caccae* strain Ll-92 deposited at NCIMB under No. 13801<sup>T</sup>.

7. (original) *Clostridium indolis* bacterial strain Ss2/1 deposited at NCIMB under No. 41156.

8. (currently amended) *Eubacterium hallii* strain SM 6/1 deposited at ~~NCIMB~~ NCIMB under No. 41155.

9. (original) A lactic acid utilising bacterium having a 16S rRNA gene sequence with at least 95% homology to one of the sequences shown in Fig. 1.

10. (canceled).

11. (canceled).

12. (currently amended) A method to promote butyric acid formation in the intestine of a mammal, said method comprising the administration of a therapeutically effective dose of at least one of the strains of bacteria as claimed in any one of Claims 6 to 9 strain selected from the group consisting of *Anaerostipes caccae* strain Ll-92 deposited at NCIMB under No. 13801<sup>T</sup>, *Clostridium indolis* bacterial strain Ss2/1 deposited at NCIMB under No. 41156 and *Eubacterium hallii* strain SM 6/1 deposited at NCIMB under No. 41155.

13. (original) The method of Claim 12 wherein said bacteria is administered as a foodstuff or as a suppository.

14. (currently amended) A method for treating a disease associated with a high dosage of lactic acid, which method comprises the administration of a therapeutically effective dose of at least one strain of live lactic acid utilising bacteria ~~as claimed in any one of Claims 6 to 9~~ selected from the group consisting of *Anaerostipes caccae* strain LI-92 deposited at NCIMB under No. 13801<sup>T</sup>, *Clostridium indolis* bacterial strain Ss2/1 deposited at NCIMB under No. 41156 and *Eubacterium hallii* strain SM 6/1 deposited at NCIMB under No. 41155.

15. (original) The method of Claim 14 wherein said disease is lactic-acidosis, short bowel syndrome or inflammatory bowel disease.

16. (currently amended) The method of ~~either one of Claims~~ Claim 14 and 15 wherein said bacteria is *Anaerostipes caccae* strain LI-92 deposited at NCIMB under No. 13801<sup>T</sup>.

17. (currently amended) A prophylactic method to reduce the incidence or severity of colorectal cancer or colitis in mammals caused in part by high lactic acid and low butyric acid concentrations, which method comprises the administration of a therapeutically effective dose of at least one strain of live lactic acid utilising bacteria ~~as claimed in any one of Claims 6 to 9~~ selected from the group consisting of *Anaerostipes caccae* strain LI-92 deposited at NCIMB under No. 13801<sup>T</sup>, *Clostridium indolis* bacterial strain Ss2/1 deposited at NCIMB under No. 41156 and *Eubacterium hallii* strain SM 6/1 deposited at NCIMB under No. 41155.

18. (currently amended) The method of Claim 17 wherein said bacteria is *Anaerostipes caccae* strain LI-92 deposited at NCIMB under No. 13801<sup>T</sup>.

19. (currently amended) A probiotic composition comprising a live bacterial strain as ~~claimed in any one of Claims 6 to 9~~ selected from the group consisting of *Anaerostipes caccae* strain L1-92 deposited at NCIMB under No. 13801<sup>T</sup>, *Clostridium indolis* bacterial strain Ss2/1 deposited at NCIMB under No. 41156 and *Eubacterium hallii* strain SM 6/1 deposited at NCIMB under No. 41155, in combination with live lactic acid producing bacteria.

20. (currently amended) The composition as claimed in Claim 19 wherein said ~~lactate~~ lactic acid producing bacteria is *Lactobacillus spp*, *Bifidobacterium spp* or a mixture thereof.

21. (currently amended) The ~~method~~ composition of ~~either one of Claims~~ Claim 19 and 20 wherein said bacteria is *Anaerostipes caccae* strain L1-92 deposited at NCIMB under No. 13801<sup>T</sup>.

22. (currently amended) The composition as claimed in ~~any one of Claims~~ Claim 19 to 21 further containing other additives or growth enhancing supplements.

23. (new) The method of claim 15 wherein said bacteria is *Anaerostipes caccae* strain L1-92 deposited at NCIMB under No. 13801<sup>T</sup>.

24. (new) The method of claim 20 wherein said bacteria is *Anaerostipes caccae* strain L1-92 deposited at NCIMB under No. 13801<sup>T</sup>.

25. (new) A method to promote butyric acid formation in the intestine of a mammal, said method comprising the administration of a therapeutically effective dose of at least one lactic acid utilising bacteria according to claim 9.

26. (new) The method of Claim 25 wherein said bacteria is administered as a foodstuff or as a suppository.

27. (new) A method for treating a disease associated with a high dosage of lactic acid, which method comprises the administration of a therapeutically effective dose of at least one lactic acid utilising bacteria according to claim 9.

28. (new) The method of Claim 27 wherein said disease is lactic-acidosis, short bowel syndrome or inflammatory bowel disease.

29. (new) The method of Claim 27 wherein said bacteria is *Anaerostipes caccae*.

30. (new) The method of Claim 28 wherein said bacteria is *Anaerostipes caccae*.

31. (new) A prophylactic method to reduce the incidence or severity of colorectal cancer or colitis in mammals caused in part by high lactic acid and low butyric acid concentrations, which method comprises the administration of a therapeutically effective dose of at least one strain of live lactic acid utilising bacteria according to claim 9.

32. (new) The method of Claim 31 wherein said bacteria is *Anaerostipes caccae*.

33. (new) A probiotic composition comprising a live bacterial strain as claimed in Claim 9, in combination with live lactic acid producing bacteria.

34. (new) The composition as claimed in Claim 33 wherein said lactic acid producing bacteria is *Lactobacillus spp*, *Bifidobacterium spp* or a mixture thereof.

35. (new) The composition of Claim 33 wherein said bacteria is *Anaerostipes caccae*.

36. (new) The composition of Claim 34 wherein said bacteria is *Anaerostipes caccae*.

37. (new) The composition as claimed in Claim 33 further containing other additives or growth enhancing supplements.